

REMARKS

Claims 1-17 are pending in this application. By this paper, Claim 1 has been amended to correct certain informalities. In view of those amendments and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the claims.

In the Office Action, Claim 1 was objected to because of certain informalities. By this paper, Claim 1 has been amended to correct those problems.

Claims 1-17 were rejected under 35 USC Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fujita et al (JP 63243194) in view of Bohn et al (US 2002/0120017). As noted in the Office Action, Fujita teaches a process for the production of hydrocarbons by reacting a mixture of hydrogen and carbon monoxide in the presence of a catalyst comprising cobalt and nickel supported on zirconia. It was further noted that the Bohn reference teaches a process for producing power, liquid hydrocarbons and carbon dioxide from heavy feedstocks, using a partial oxidation and steam reforming to produce a synthesis gas, a Fischer-Tropsch reactor to convert the synthesis gas to hydrocarbon products and tail gases containing hydrogen and carbon dioxide, removing carbon dioxide from the tail gas, recycling part of the tail gas depleted in carbon dioxide to a partial oxidation reactor and a portion of the tail gas being recycled to a combined cycle plant to produce power from steam generated by recovering heat from the reactors and from combustible tail gases. The Fischer-Tropsch process in Bohn utilizes an iron-based catalyst. See paragraph [0038].

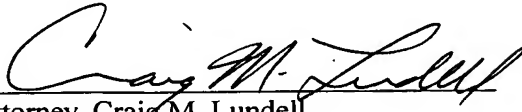
Applicants respectfully submit that it would not have been obvious to combine the teachings of these two references. In fact, the Bohn reference teaches away from the possibility of combining the references. In particular, paragraph [0017] of Bohn teaches that due to the relatively low hydrogen content of the heavy crude oil, any FT catalyst useful in converting synthesis gas produced by partial oxidation of heavy crude oil must possess some water/gas shift activity. “Therefore, modern cobalt-based FT catalysts which have very little WGS activity cannot generally be used when the POX feedstock is a heavy crude oil, coke or coal.” (emphasis added) Accordingly, the Bohn process would not work with the catalyst of Fujita and it would not have been obvious to combine the teachings of the two references.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that the claims are now in condition for allowance and favorable consideration by the Examiner is requested. Should the Examiner find

any impediment to the allowance of the claims which could be corrected by a telephone interview, the Examiner is requested to initiate such an interview with the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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